

Testimony in opposition to LD 233  
Submitted to the Judiciary Committee

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### **Legislative Testimony Opposing LD 233**

Good afternoon, Chairperson, Ranking Member, and members of the committee. My name is Jess Knox, and I'm here today as a parent, a lifelong athlete and coach, and a straight white man who believes in fairness, compassion, and common sense. I'm not testifying today because I have a trans child. I'm here because I have children and care about the world in which they're growing up.

As a parent, I want every child to belong. My kids have played on teams their whole lives. We've spent weekends on the sidelines, early mornings at practice, and late nights cheering them on. And I can tell you, sports at the youth level are not just about competition. They're about connection. They teach our kids how to be teammates, how to win with humility, and how to lose with grace.

### **Every kid deserves that experience, including trans kids.**

Passing this ban solves nothing and hurts everything. The legislation being considered doesn't protect fairness. It doesn't solve any real problem. What it does is tell a small group of kids, who are already facing enormous challenges, that they are not welcome. There is no epidemic of trans athletes taking over school sports. What *is* happening is a coordinated political effort to single out children for who they are and turn them into scapegoats. That's not leadership. That's cruelty wrapped in bureaucracy.

This is not only poor policy — it is bad parenting by proxy. If one of my children returned home saying a teammate was being left out solely based on their identity, I would be outraged. I would explain that such behavior is not what good teammates exemplify. This is not how we should treat others. What message are we conveying to our children — all of them — when we enact laws that suggest "Some individuals are unworthy of participation"? We are not promoting sportsmanship. We are not encouraging fairness. Instead, we are fostering fear and exclusion.

### **Let's Focus on the Real Issues**

If this body is genuinely committed to girls in sports, there are real problems worth addressing:

- Unequal funding between boys' and girls' programs
- Pay-to-play barriers that leave out low-income families
- Burnout from over-competition at too young an age

None of those problems are caused by trans kids.

We don't need to agree on everything — just on human dignity. I'm not asking you to understand everything about gender identity. I'm asking you to see these kids as they are: children. Children who want to play sports, make friends, and feel like they belong. As a parent, that's all I've ever desired for my own kids — and I want the same for someone else's child, too.

**Please, Vote No**

Do not pass legislation that singles out, shames, or excludes these kids. Don't let fear dictate how we treat children. Allow them to play. Allow them to be kids. And let this state be a place where *every* child belongs, not just the ones we understand.

Thank you.